

Rochester City Golf News

Spring/Summer, 2016

Providing News You Can Use On and Off The Golf Course

On The Tee

Welcome to this, our first ever issue of Golf News for Rochester City Golf. We hope this newsletter provides you with useful information about city golf courses and the game we enjoy. With this first glimpse, we hope to show you a few of the many things happening within the city golf operation during the first half of the 2016 golf season.

One thing we’ve already discovered, on the nice days, is that we’re very, very busy. All golf courses are reporting a burst of activity on really nice days, especially the weekends. As always, it’s a good reminder that reserving a tee time in advance can be a really good idea.

We hope you enjoy this news bulletin and others that will be available during the 2016 golf season.

Good Golfing,

David Richardson
PGA Golf Professional
Soldiers Field GC

Jeff Gorman
PGA Golf Professional
Eastwood GC

Around The Horn...

Eastwood GC - Stump removal for the more than 30 trees that were removed over the winter has been completed. Stumps have been ground and covered with soil and affected areas are expected to be fully grassed over by late May. The washout area on Hole #12 will soon be repaired to provide a long-term solution to the erosion in front of the green.

Hadley Creek GC – Season pass sales have increased more than 10% this year and participation continues to grow in the Men’s Senior League and Women’s Leagues. The fifth fairway is expanding by more than an acre as drainage has been improved, reducing surface water, with the removal of several beaver dams and improved water flow through Hadley Creek.

Northern Hills GC - We’ve heard many, many positive comments about the improvement in golf course conditions this year, the improvement over the past several years has been dramatic. Healthy fairways, greens, and rough exist throughout the golf course. New Concessionaire Eric Karow has made a positive impression with many golfers with his service orientation, expanded hours of operation, a popular menu, and tap beer that’s now available.

Soldiers Field GC – The “New and Improved” Soldiers Field underwent significant change this year with the elimination of nearly all “No Mow” grass areas and a tree trimming project that has greatly improved playability and sightlines.

All four golf courses have been successful in implementing the new RecTrac computer software program introduced in March – thank you for your patience. We are now able to process and service Season Passes more efficiently, as well as gain valuable information regarding play patterns and more. Out Point of Sale terminal provides greater efficiency and accuracy throughout our system in tracking income.

Tee time reservation capability through the internet, another benefit of the RecTrac system, will be available at Eastwood GC and Soldiers Field GC in June. Availability at Northern Hills GC and Hadley Creek GC will be available as soon as fast and affordable internet service is available.

Equipment Upgrades

We’ve been fortunate to have received 19 total pieces of new equipment within the Golf Division in 2016. Most of the new equipment replaced old, worn equipment. Like a car with over 250,000 miles on the odometer, many pieces of old equipment worked poorly and required frequent repair. The new equipment allows the maintenance staff to work more quickly, efficiently, and, in many cases, more effectively in providing high quality golf course conditions.



One of several new utility vehicles used for hauling materials and supplies around the golf courses.



A new tee mower (left) and greens mower (right) at Northern Hills GC.



A new fairway mower at Eastwood GC provides a more consistent, accurate, and quicker cut.

Golf Advisory Group

In conjunction with the Rochester Park Board, a Golf Advisory Group was created late in 2015 to receive feedback from the golfing community. The Group is made up of two city golfers from each of the four Rochester City golf courses, their golf professionals, golf course superintendent Joe Fischer, Park Board Chairman Larry Mortensen, and the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department, Paul Widman.

Some of the highlights from the meetings include:

- City golf courses experienced a 6.8% increase in rounds of golf played in 2015. The increase was attributed to better than average weather, improved golf course conditions, the reestablishment of the senior golf pass, and a revision of fees for golfers under age 30 and under.
- Management within the Golf Division was restructured in 2015 with the elimination of the Golf Director's position. Eastwood GC golf professional Jeff Gorman has assumed many of the duties in overseeing golf course conditions. Soldiers Field GC golf professional David Richardson has assumed many of the administrative functions within the Golf Division.
- The financial performance of the Golf Division has improved over the past five years and is trending toward break-even status, hopefully in 2016.
- While there are many infrastructure needs, many are being addressed; automatic irrigation upgrades are nearly complete at Northern Hills GC and Soldiers Field GC, 19 pieces of new equipment (greens mowers, tee mowers, sand machines, etc.) will be in use throughout the Golf Division in 2016, replacing considerably aged equipment. Planning is underway for the construction of a much needed new clubhouse at Northern Hills GC.
- Improved communications with city golfers is a goal in 2016 through the use of Facebook, the city website, and the publication of informational items such as this letter.
- Golf service and programming is considered to be a strength within the Golf Division. Additional programs for juniors, including the possibilities of providing free golf play times for junior golfers, was suggested.
- Other suggestions included: eliminating much of the "no mow" grass areas at Eastwood GC and Soldiers Field GC, a review of the need for protective fencing near the tee boxes at Soldiers Field GC, the addition of reflective tape on the pins for golfers using yardage measuring devices, and increasing awareness of slow play problems.

The Golf Advisory Group will meet several more throughout the year. If you have any suggestions, comments, or concerns, you'd like to have addressed by the Golf Advisory Group, please forward them to any golf professional and they will be addressed by the Golf Advisory Group.

Rochester City Golf By The Numbers:

¾" - The average height of cut for fairway grass.

607 – Yards of the longest hole in Rochester City Golf, the par five 14th hole at Eastwood GC

14,721 – The (estimated) record number of range balls hit at Hadley Creek in a single day.

99% - Percentage of golfers whose golf grip is the main cause of their slice.

79,000 – The number of golf rounds played at city golf courses in 2015, a 7% increase from 2014.

48 – The record number of hamburgers made in one day by Jess at the Eastwood grill.

120 Minutes – Maximum amount of time four players should take to complete 9 holes.

59 – The men's course record at Soldiers Field GC, shot in early 1960's by Rochester City golfer Bob Felten.

129/1,000" – Typical height of cut for putting greens, during the summer season at city golf courses.

13 – The number of "Good" golfable days March-April of this year, compared to 28 "Good" golfable days in 2015. Fortunately, the weather this May has been much better!

210 – The Rochester All-City 3 day tournament record score (2 under par) set by 7 time All-City Champion Greg Peterson in 1997.

9 ½ Feet – The average Stimpmeter rating sought, on average, for the speed of greens at city golf courses. Stimpmeter readings measure the relative speed of a putting green, a U.S. Open green would typically have a stimpmeter reading of 13 feet.

454 – The number of junior golfers who participated in the First Tee Junior Golf Program in 2015. Over 500 are projected to participate in 2016.

10 – Number of acres of wildflowers at Northern Hills GC dedicated to wildlife habitat.

1 - The number of Rochester City Golfers enshrined in the Minnesota Golf Hall of Fame. Lynn Esau Zmistowski gained her championship form playing golf at Soldiers Field GC in the 1960's.